SONG OF THE LONG MARCH

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SONG OF THE LONG MARCH

< CHAPTER 53 >

AUTHOR: XIA DA

YOU SAID .
THIS BELONGED TO YOUR MOTHER?
WHERE IS SHE?

SHE IS NO LONGER AMONG THE LIVING.
BULLSHIT!
IF YOU'RE REALLY HER DAUGHTER, WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO BEFORE!?
DON'T SCARE HER!

MY MOTHER...
NEVER TALKED ABOUT HER PAST,
THE NAME OF HER TRIBE OR HER ORIGINAL IDENTITY...
NOR DID SHE MENTION A SINGLE THING AS SHE GAVE ME THIS HAIR ORNAMENT
IF I HAD NOT HAPPENED TO COME TO THIS PLACE,
I WOULD NEVER HAVE KNOWN ABOUT ANY OF THIS.

ELTEBER..
HOW COULD I HAVE COME FORWARD?
CHILD,
CAN YOU DESCRIBE HER APPEARANCE FOR ME?

HER EYES
GLITTERED LIKE JADE.
WHEN SHE SMILED,
SHE RESEMBLED YOU VERY MUCH
HER SINGING VOICE WAS SONOROUS LIKE THE FLUTE...
HER SKIN WAS WHITE AS SNOW...
HER LONG GOLDEN HAIR AND SLENDER FINGERS...
WERE NO DIFFERENT FROM THE ELTEBER'S.

OTHER THAN THAT MOLE...
OTHER THAN THAT,
SHE AND I LOOKED NOTHING ALIKE.

MY DEAR CHILD,
YOU ARE GOING TO BREAK THIS OLD LADY'S HEART...

WHY WAS SHE WITH THE HANS?
WHO IS YOUR FATHER?
MY FATHER WAS ORIGINALLY A CAPTAIN IN THE SUI ARMY.
I HEARD FROM THE SERVANTS' WHISPERINGS THAT HE RESCUED MY MOTHER FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.
WHERE IS HE?
HE HAS ALSO PASSED AWAY.

WAS YOUR MOTHER HAPPY?
DID HE TREAT YOUR MOTHER WELL?
YES,
THEY WERE DEEPLY IN LOVE AND NEVER APART.
MY MOTHER ... LIVED A LIFE FREE OF WORRY.

IF SHE HAD COME BACK,
I WOULD NEVER HAVE LET THE TURKS TAKE HER AGAIN.
OR WE WOULD HAVE HEARD FROM HER.
SHE MUST HAVE BEEN HAPPY,
HOWEVER COULD YOU HAVE STOOD UP TO THE TURKS BACK THEN?
LET THE TURKS TAKE HER?
CHILD,
YOUR RETURN IS MOST TIMELY.

Wooooooo
Wooooooo
THIS GRAND SPECTACLE IS POSITIVELY UNSETTLING,
MY FRIEND.

WE ARE JUST RETURNING HOME,
THERE'S NO NEED FOR ELTEBER TO TREAT US AS GUESTS
HOW COULD I ASK EVERYONE TO STAND ON SUCH CEREMONY?
YOU ARE ALREADY HERE, Y'NAN IRKIN.
SURELY YOU WON'T MIND WE SPREAD THE WORD OF YOUR ARRIVAL?

TUJIA,
BRING YOUR GIFT AND PAY YOUR RESPECTS TO THE OLD LADY.
YES, FATHER.
ELTEBER,
NOT GOING TO INVITE YOUR TRAVEL-WEARY GUESTS INTO THE TENT?
COME NOW.
WITH ALL THIS RUCKUS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE TRIP... THE TURKS AND ALL THE DIFFERENT TRIBES OF THE NORTHERN REACHES WILL HAVE FOUND OUT BY NOW.
.....
LET'S SPEAK IN THE TENT.

MR QIN..
YES.
PLEASE FOLLOW ME..
PRIN-CESS?
OUR PRINCESS WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU
Creak
THANK YOU, MISS

IN THE END, YOU WERE UNABLE TO...
AVOID THIS...

I WAS TOO HASTY,
AND I SLIPPED UP
BUT THAT IS ALSO WHY... IN DAYS TO COME, WHEN YOU ARE WRONGED,
CON-FLICTED,
THE CURRENT SITUATION DOES NOT OBSTRUCT ANY OF OUR PLANS, AND IS IN FACT ADVANTAGEOUS TO US
I KNOW HOW STRONG-WILLED YOU ARE...
FEARFUL, OR EVEN IN GRIEF.
THERE WILL BE NO ONE FOR YOU TO SHARE YOUR BURDENS WITH
I KNOW.
THIS IS WHAT I DESERVE.

THE TEMPLE MISTRESS HAS ALREADY WARNED ME,
IF I ACT ACCORDING TO MY HEART, I HAVE TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OUTCOME.
.....
MR QIN,
WHAT DOES YI'NAN IRKIN THINK OF ALL THIS?
NOW THAT TROUBLE IS BREWING IN WESTERN TURK,
XUEYANTUO WANTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE DISTRACTION AND SHAKE OFF THEIR CONTROL, AND MIGRATE NORTH, BACK TO THEIR ANCESTRAL LANDS.

THEREFORE, THEIR MOST URGENT OBJECTIVE IS TO ALLY THEMSELVES WITH THE UYGHUR ARMY TO REPEL THE EASTERN TURKS,
SO AS TO END THE TURKS' HOLD OVER THE NORTHERN REACHES.
AND THEIR CONDITIONS ARE?
THAT UYGHUR RETURN XUEYANTUO'S ANCESTRAL LANDS,
WHICH UYGHUR HAS BEEN CONTROL-LING FOR DECADES SINCE XUEYANTUO MIGRATED WEST.
.....

MY SON,
HAVE YOUR INJURIES HEALED?

WORRY NOT, FATHER.
I AM STRONG AND HEALTHY. MY INJURIES HAVE LONG HEALED.
WITH YOUR STRENGTH AND COURAGE,
WHEN YOU ACCOMPANY ME ON THIS EXPEDITION TO UYGHUR,
YOU SHALL DOUBTLESS BE THE ONE WHO LANDS THE MOST ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

SHE'ER, GUARD THE MAIN CAMP WELL FOR ME.
REST ASSURED, MY LORD KHAN.
.....
THE TWO OF YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN COMPETING WITH EACH OTHER SINCE YOU WERE LITTLE
YOUR SQUABBLES...
DO NOT CONCERN ME.
DON'T BE SO CHILDISH
YES, FATHER.

.....
YES,

IT WON'T AFFECT US.
FATHER.

THE ELTEBER IS DESPERATE TO PULL XUEYANTUO ONTO HIS BATTLE WAGON.
YI'NAN IRKIN ALSO UNDERSTANDS IF THEY CANNOT ACHIEVE VICTORY, EVERYTHING IS MOOT.
SO BEFORE THE BATTLE, NOT ONLY WILL THEY STAY ON AMIABLE TERMS WITH EACH OTHER,
THEY WILL EVEN TACITLY TRY TO EMBROIL THE OTHER TRIBES OF THE NORTHERN REACHES INTO THIS CONFLICT.
INDEED.
MASTER, PLEASE GIVE YOUR ORDERS.

FORCE THE TURKS OUT OF THE NORTHERN REACHES.
WE FIGHT.

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